

Skew Arch Bridge  
North Sixth Street at Woodward Street  
Reading  
Berks County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1025

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1025

## SKEW ARCH BRIDGE

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PA  
6-READ

Location: North Sixth Street at Woodward Street, Reading,  
Berks County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: The Reading Company

Brief Statement  
of Significance: An unusual masonry bridge which is of importance  
from a structural and architectural viewpoint.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This bridge was built for the Reading Company, having been completed in 1857. The designer was Richard B. Osborne. At the time of its completion, it was nicknamed the "Soap and Whiskey Bridge" due to the fact that the designer made a model of the bridge from pieces of soap before it was built and the Irish workmen who built the bridge were paid partly in whiskey.

Reference: Federal Writers' Project, Pennsylvania, A Guide to the  
Keystone State (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940),  
pages 320-321.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Skew Arch Bridge is an unusual example of the early use of a complex masonry form. The courses of brownstone are laid in elliptical curves which follow the oblique angle that the railroad tracks made with the street. On each side of the central arch, which spans the street, there is a small arch spanning the sidewalk.

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